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# Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

*Provisional*

**6438**th meeting

Wednesday, 8 December 2010, 11 a.m.

New York

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| *President:* | Ms. Rice | (United States of America) |
| *Members:* | Austria | Mr. Mayr-Harting |
| | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Mr. Barbalić |
| | Brazil | Mrs. Viotti |
| | China | Mr. Wang Min |
| | France | Mr. Briens |
| | Gabon | Mr. Issoze-Ngondet |
| | Japan | Mr. Sumi |
| | Lebanon | Mr. Khachab |
| | Mexico | Mr. Heller |
| | Nigeria | Mr. Onemola |
| | Russian Federation | Ms. Eloeva |
| | Turkey | Ms. Dinç |
| | Uganda | Mr. Rugunda |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Ms. Hendrie |

## Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2010/584)

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*The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Central African Republic**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2010/584)**

**The President**: I have received a letter from the representative of the Central African Republic, requesting to participate in this meeting. I propose to invite that representative to participate in this meeting without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

**The President**: On behalf of the Security Council, I extend an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic.

It is so decided.

On behalf of the Security Council, I also extend an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Jan Grauls, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Belgium.

It is so decided.

Participants have before them document S/2010/584, the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country.

I now give the floor to Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde.

**Ms. Zewde**: Thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country. Since the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/584) was finalized, there have been some developments in the preparations for elections and in the security situation in the country. I shall now update the Council on these elements.

The Central African Republic is at a crossroads. Presidential and legislative elections are due to take place on 23 January. Those elections constitute another window of opportunity for the people of the Central African Republic to participate in the democratic process and to further consolidate the country's democratic foundations and mark the start of a new chapter of stability and greater economic prosperity for all.

In order to achieve those goals, however, the elections must be transparent, free and fair. I am pleased to report that the United Nations and our international partners have provided considerable technical and financial support to the Independent Electoral Commission, which is entrusted with the implementation of the electoral process. As the Secretary-General's report indicates, there have been hitches all along the way, but with a high degree of commitment from the Government, working together with the Independent Electoral Commission and the opposition, solutions have been found and all major political obstacles have been lifted.

On 15 November 2010, President Bozizé convened a meeting of national stakeholders and international partners to resolve an issue related to the amendment of the dates for the nomination of candidates. As a result of that meeting, the deadlock was broken and two more opposition candidates were able to submit their candidatures, so that there are now six candidates running for the presidency. That positive development has lent further credence to the integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process.

As a result of the decision to allow for additional candidates after the revised date for submission, the opposition parties were also able to submit their nominations for the 105 seats in the National Assembly. That has contributed to an easing of tensions. On 5 December, the Independent Electoral Commission published the names of the 833 candidates standing for seats in the National Assembly. All candidates in the elections should now have the opportunity to campaign freely. I hope that the electoral process will continue to take place in a calm and positive atmosphere.

I am pleased to add that, with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic and the International Organization of la Francophonie, the code of conduct for the elections will be revised and signed by the candidates and relevant institutions in the days ahead, and distributed prior to the start of electoral campaigning.

On 20 November, a new Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization — a key Government minister in charge of electoral matters — was appointed, demonstrating the Government's commitment to the success of the elections. The appointment of the former President of the 2005 Electoral Commission to that important post is a welcome development.

The United Nations Development Programme has ably managed the basket fund for the elections. I would like to reiterate the Secretary-General's gratitude for the support that has been received so far. I would encourage donors to make good on outstanding pledges and to provide the additional funds required to cover the operational costs of the Electoral Commission at this critical stage, so that the last elements can be put in place to ensure that the elections are conducted successfully.

The verification of ex-combatants in the north-west of the country has now been completed. In order to allow the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process to move forward, the parties to the inclusive political dialogue need to uphold all of their commitments so that disarmament can take place. In spite of recent violence, I hope that conditions in the north-east will improve sufficiently to allow the verification process to start there. The development of a national reintegration strategy for ex-combatants, which is a key element of the DDR process, will serve as an important incentive for armed groups to disarm and demobilize. In that regard, we look forward to working together with the Government in the development of such a strategy as the next urgent step in the process.

The challenges in consolidating the current relative stability and making further progress are considerable. While security in the capital and the south-west of the country is satisfactory, thanks to the presence of the Forces armees centrafricaines, the eastern part of the country remains exposed to continued acts of banditry, incursions by foreign armed groups and attacks by politico-military groups that are not part of the peace process.

The Lord's Resistance Army is the most high-profile of the foreign groups active in the Central African Republic. The atrocities that they commit are well known. It is, however, just one of a number of groups of militants, bandits and poachers that exploit the absence of State security forces to operate freely in the prevailing security vacuum. The start of the dry season has led to a resurgence in attacks by armed gangs — the "coupeurs de route" — that attack lines of communication in the region and disrupt the free movement of people and goods. The Central African Republic cannot be allowed to become a haven for criminality and armed groups in the subregion.

On 24 November, the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP), a politico-military group that is not part of the peace process, attacked Birao, less than 10 days after the withdrawal of the forces of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, which had previously secured the town and the airstrip. The CPJP had already attacked Birao on 18 July. The town was re-secured a week later and, on 3 December, international non-governmental organizations operating in Birao confirmed that the airstrip appeared to remain functional, although widespread looting had occurred while the town's population had been displaced. As a result, the civilian population of Birao remains extremely vulnerable and short of food and medical supplies.

The lack of security is responsible for the considerable and unnecessary loss of life, suffering and displacement of people. The Government is not in a position to address this state of affairs without adequate means and resources. The Secretary-General's report highlights the need for increased capacity and capability for the Central African armed forces, as well as for the effective implementation of the stalled security sector reform programme. The Secretary-General reiterated that call to the international community and to the Central African Republic's bilateral partners following the recent attack on Birao.

The Central African Government has made serious efforts to extend its authority and its ability to provide services to citizens throughout the country through its facilitation of reconciliation efforts among

the various factions and ethnic groups, including in the Vakaga region. An important part of the work to be done in order to bring the country together lies in ensuring that the Follow-up Committee on the Inclusive Political Dialogue continues to make progress in implementing the recommendations agreed between national stakeholders. In the days ahead, the Follow-up Committee is due to undertake a further tour of the country to assess progress made in implementing the recommendations of the dialogue and to report its findings to the National Assembly.

Let me conclude by expressing my personal gratitude to the Peacebuilding Commission's Central African Republic configuration and its Chair, Ambassador Grauls, and to the Peacebuilding Fund for their continued and committed support. My thanks go to the United Nations country team and all in our integrated mission for their invaluable contribution to our shared goal of assisting the Government and people of the Central African Republic in consolidating a lasting peace and laying strong foundations for solid, sustainable socio-economic development in a peaceful and democratic environment.

**The President**: I thank Ms. Zewde for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jan Grauls.

**Mr. Grauls** (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madame President, for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council in my capacity of Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic. I would like to highlight some of the issues related to the implementation of the strategic framework for peacebuilding in the Central African Republic since I last updated the Council in June (see S/PV.6435).

First of all, however, allow me to express the sincere appreciation of the Central African Republic configuration to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, for her tireless and determined efforts under sometimes difficult circumstances.

I am pleased that the integrated strategic framework developed by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) for 2011 incorporates the peacebuilding priorities identified by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), furthering the convergence of and coherence between the work of our Commission and that of the United Nations system on the ground in support of the Government's priorities.

Such coherence would also be improved by establishing an operational focal point within BINUCA in order to ensure the continuity of our work on a daily basis. The PBC also looks forward to the opportunity to contribute in due time to formulating the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2012-2016, another measure that will contribute to the coherence of our efforts.

As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General just pointed out, the presidential and parliamentary elections are still scheduled to take place on 23 January 2011, according to a consensual timetable established by the Independent Electoral Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission has contributed considerably to bridging the $7.5 million gap in the electoral budget. The successful completion of the electoral process that we all expect should create positive momentum for the Central African Republic Government's plans for the next stages of its peacebuilding process. The Commission stands ready to continue its support for the Government's efforts in this area.

In the past year, the Commission's attention has been focused mainly on the electoral preparations and on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The latter has been continually delayed. So far, the good news is that the verification phase of the process has been completed in the country's north-west. Unfortunately, the volatile security situation and the reluctance of several armed groups to join the peace process have not allowed this phase to start in the north-east, from which the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) withdrew in November. As a result, the disarmament and demobilization phases there cannot be completed before the elections.

It is even more important, however, that the Government of the Central African Republic establish a complete strategy for the reintegration phase, including the reinsertion of some former combatants into the national security forces. The reintegration phase should be financed with funds from States members of Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the Bank of Central African States. I am therefore certain that a clear message from the

Security Council to the recalcitrant rebel movements and the Government about the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process would greatly contribute to the achievement of our common goals.

On 20 September, the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the World Bank organized a high-level event here in New York to address the peacebuilding and development challenges facing the Central African Republic. This took place in the presence of the Secretary-General, President Bozizé of the Central African Republic, the Vice-President for Africa of the World Bank, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and high-level representatives of various countries and regional and subregional organizations. The purpose of the event was threefold: to showcase the positive progress that has been made in the Central African Republic in recent years; to generate attention for the considerable challenges that remain; and to serve as a stepping stone to a donors conference, to be organized after the successful holding of the elections in order to mobilize funding for other priorities. Thanks to a collective effort, I believe that this threefold goal was achieved.

One of the most important priority areas for the months and years to come will be security sector reform (SSR). As noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/584), the implementation of the SSR agenda has been stalled, but the Government has indicated its willingness to revive the process in cooperation with its international partners. In the run-up to the aforementioned donors conference, the list of existing security sector reform projects should be updated and prioritized in order to have a clear project to submit to potential donors. I welcome in this regard the establishment of a Security Institutions Unit within BINUCA, which will undoubtedly give renewed impetus to Government efforts in this area.

Good governance and the rule of law are also part of the peacebuilding priorities for the coming year. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) already runs a multi-year programme that should be complemented and refined. At our configuration's request, UNDP is working on a strategy paper on the rule of law that will identify the key priorities in the field, which should include impunity and human rights violations. Our configuration will also continue to monitor with particular attention the issues of women and peace and security, child protection and the human rights of internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic.

The year 2011 will also see the effective launch of the development hubs project, piloted by the European Union, which constitutes the third priority of the strategic framework for peacebuilding. This ambitious project, whose aim is to re-establish a Government presence in nine secondary centres in the provinces, starting with the provision of basic services, will require substantially greater resources than the €40 million allocated by the European Union so far.

Finally, I would like to address the question of MINURCAT's departure from north-eastern Central African Republic. During the last briefing on BINUCA and the interactive consultative dialogue of this Council with the Foreign Minister of the Central African Republic, I consistently pleaded for a transitional phase, to include a presence of the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic in the Vakaga region, with international support, to allow more time for the requested reinforcement of the Central African security forces. The recent rebel attack by the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace on Birao once again illustrated that the danger of instability remains real and persistent in that part of the Central African Republic. Regional spillover should be avoided at all cost. Once again, a strong message from the Security Council in this regard would be most welcome.

**The President**: I thank Ambassador Grauls for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

**Mr. Poukré-Kono** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Allow me on behalf of the Government of the Central African Republic to congratulate you, Madame President, on your delegation's assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are encouraged by your country's commitment to helping fragile States in their struggle against insecurity and violence wherever it occurs.

The Central African Republic has taken due note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/584) on the political, security and socio-economic situation and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic

(BINUCA). We believe that the report is important and timely in view of the national and international stakes.

We thank Her Excellency Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her highly edifying briefing. We are aware of her perspicacity, commitment and devotion to our country's cause, and once again we express our deep respect for her.

The Central African Republic is on the path towards the elections scheduled for 23 January 2011. Clear assurances have been provided by President Bozizé that the actions currently under way shall result in the holding of free, equitable and transparent elections. The list of six candidates has been made known, the voter registration process has been carried out and the final preparatory measures are concluding. All dossiers have been deposited pursuant to the presidential decree and to the provisions of the Independent Electoral Commission. Finally, there is consensus on a manual electoral roll.

The matter of redrawing of electoral districts remains pending. We acknowledge that this has not been an easy process, because it has often been interrupted by destabilizing, worrisome actions. Reason has finally prevailed and consensus will continue even if discontent exists here and there, which is the rule in democracies, as long as it does not impede our objective of holding the elections by the given deadlines.

However, in order to enable these elections, stability in our national territory must be assured. There are genuine concerns in a number of regions, where insecurity remains rife and fuelled by rebel groups that have still not signed the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement and do not feel bound by their national duty, in spite of the hand that has been extended by the Government. Furthermore, unidentified armed groups are active in the principal region in the north-east. We hope that a solution will be found by then so that all Central Africans can participate in elections that are so important for the future of the country. One thing that is certain and reassuring is the cooperation of the former rebel groups with the Central African armed forces in areas that have not been secured.

The alarm has often been raised about the north-eastern section of the country in case of the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCAT). Indeed, as soon as the United Nations Mission left, the principal city in the north, Birao, was invaded by the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace and other rebel groups. That confirmed the concerns that have been raised here in this Chamber.

The presence of Central African forces is far too limited in that area and they lack equipment and arms. It is therefore easy to attack and to create confusion among civilians who have fled to the bush. However, voices have spoken out, even here, in favour of preventing a vacuum from developing and of ensuring a transitional period. The Central African Government has also conveyed its equipment and training needs to the Security Council. We have asked friendly countries to provide assistance. Bureaucratic machinery has finally begun to move as a result of those steps.

The Government must therefore take such necessary steps. It has always called for our defence and security forces to be properly equipped, trained and deployed; this has been its main concern. We have called for the return of MINURCAT equipment. However, that request has had no effect. The Central African position on the need to strengthen its armed forces remains clear. We have consistently supported the idea of strengthening regional peace forces in both personnel and logistical terms, as has been proposed by the international community.

An alliance of foreign and Central African rebel groups, aligned with criminal groups, threaten further destabilization and discord in the region. Major ills require major responses. That is the way to respond to these criminal groups. The Central African Republic is not remaining idle in this situation, and that is why we welcome the initiative adopted by the United States Government to support the struggle of countries in the region against the excesses of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), pursuant to the recommendations of the Bangui conference on the LRA. The same should apply to other armed groups through the implementation of cross-border agreements among neighbouring countries.

A further important step remains the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which is one of the recommendations issued from the inclusive political dialogue. To this we should add security sector reform and the rule of law. Security and justice are constant

concerns of ours, as they are essential to lasting sociopolitical stabilization.

If disarmament and demobilization process has made progress in the north-west, that is not the case in the north-east, given not only the reticence of a number of groups to adhere to the various peace agreements that have been signed, but also the prevailing insecurity caused by the presence of a number of armed groups, including the LRA. However, we must underscore that financing remains essential to any such undertaking. We note that the majority of projects lack adequate financing to begin; this is especially true of projects addressing security sector reform, which has been the subject of round tables and seminars in the past. The reinsertion of ex-combatants is equally essential to ensuring the implementation of the development hubs.

Several years of conflict in the Central African Republic have destroyed the economic fabric of the country and its infrastructure, lowered our standard of living and weakened our administration by driving many functionaries to seek better lives elsewhere, and led to a deterioration of basic social services. The institutional dysfunction is visible. Corruption and delays are rife. However, we must recognize that following the patriotic events of 15 March 2003, palpable change took place in the wake of the elections that were held, the organization of political dialogue, and the courageous reform launched by the Government to help the country out of its deadlock. One of the most pressing priorities remains the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy paper. In other words, the Central African Republic is getting back on its feet, even while a great deal remains to be done in terms of security, stability, respect for human rights, and so on.

On 20 September, when the special high-level meeting on the Central African Republic was held, President Bozize commented on the development of the Central African Republic since it embarked on its reconciliation process. That encounter allowed participants to take stock of the efforts that had been made and future prospects. It also demonstrated the return of trust and confidence among our partners. I wish here to sincerely thank the sponsors of that initiative, the World Bank and the Central African configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, with which the Central African Republic enjoys good relations. Once again, we would like to express my the esteem of my Government and our partners for the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission in its Central African Republic configuration, Ambassador Grauls of Belgium.

The Central African Republic has celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this year. Although our State is still in its infant stage, we have been able to turn the page on the past and to plan for the future. We therefore ask the international community to understand our errors and to help us to correct them. What is most important is to listen to us before issuing demands. That is why we have welcomed the presence of BINUCA and the other partners we have agreed to host.

Like any other institution, BINUCA must evolve. BINUCA, which replaced the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic a year ago, must adapt to the new requirements in the Central African Republic. It is time to take stock of its activities on the ground. Its principle mandate is to align the actions of all United Nations agencies and funds and to speak as one.

As that institution is still taking shape, the Central African Government fully endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend its mandate for one year, until 31 December 2011. In general terms, the Government is satisfied with the assistance provided by BINUCA and recognizes the commitment and devotion of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic.

At the same time, the Government is of the view that BINUCA should do more by prioritizing training and the strengthening of national capacity in all areas. Its proven international expertise should have an impact on the people and the various sectors. That is what we aspire to for the coming year.

The future withdrawal of BINUCA should not leave a vacuum, as we have witnessed with the withdrawal of MINURCAT. We hope that BINUCA will fully discharge its mandate in good faith, and we expect to see the dividends of the transfer of its expertise. Furthermore, given that the two working languages of the United Nations are English and French, we dare to hope that the integrated mission will also include Central African officials of proven competence among its staff. Neither English nor French should take priority when it comes to recruitment. Furthermore, this category of staff should

enjoy the status of international officials, rather than that of local staff.

At the same time, the presence of BINUCA in the Central African Republic is all the more welcome given that its scope of action has been expanded and is to further expand in the North-East with a physical presence requiring supplementary resources. BINUCA should therefore be the focus of the full attention of Mission Support to allow it to better discharge its mandate. The members of the Security Council might seriously envisage a rapid solution to the problems described paragraphs 72 and 84 of the Secretary-General's report.

To conclude, the Central African Republic will continue to cooperate with all its partners, without exception. Ours is not a desperate case. Like other States, it implements policies within its capacities to ensure the survival of its people and the preservation of its institutions. It has demonstrated this in many instances, and calls for international aid to support its actions.

**The President**: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.*